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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 002854

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [ASEC](#) [EG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO THE U.S. ELICITS  
QUIET REACTION, WHILE VISIT TO EGYPT BY FOREIGN MINISTER  
SHALOM ATTRACTS LOCAL ATTENTION

Classified by ECPO Counselor John Desrocher for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d).

1. (C) Egyptian press and MFA contacts offered tempered reactions to public comments by President Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Sharon following their April 11 Crawford, Texas summit. Worried that the President might offer Sharon political cover for Israeli efforts to consolidate control over the West Bank and Israeli settlements there, MFA contacts expressed relief over the President's firm stance in support of both sides' Roadmap commitments, including those by Israel on removing unauthorized outposts and preventing the expansion of settlements. Egypt remains focused on promoting coordination between Israel and the Palestinians on Gaza disengagement and continues to press both sides privately. Following disengagement, Egypt plans to focus its diplomatic efforts on extracting from Israel a specific timetable for direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on final status issues such as borders and refugees. With the Sharon visit to the U.S. still in progress, the media reaction in Egypt so far has been muted.

2. (C) On April 12, Israeli Foreign Minister Shalom visited Cairo for meetings with President Mubarak, Intelligence Chief Soliman, and Foreign Minister Aboul Gheit. No major announcements or breakthroughs were made public during the visit, but MFA contacts note that the visit was both cordial and productive. Shalom was in Cairo looking for GOE support for Israeli efforts to expand its diplomatic relations in the Arab world. Israel is also hoping to gain Egyptian support for pressing the Palestinian leadership to do more to crack down on violence and the infrastructure of terror. On the bilateral side, MFA Office Director for Palestinian Affairs told poloff that Shalom and Aboul Gheit, along with the Egyptian Minister of Petroleum, discussed and were close to agreement on a deal for Egypt to export natural gas to Israel. Labib also confirmed that an agreement on Egypt's provision of 700-800 border guards to the Gaza and Israel border was not reached during Shalom's visit to Cairo. The Egyptian and Israeli ministers did, however make progress during a working lunch toward setting up a bilateral working committee to address all aspects of the relationship, "from visas to commercial deals."

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GRAY